



CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Community Development Strategy 2015-2018
Executive Summary

'Developing cohesive and engaged communities'

April 2015

Executive Summary

Background

As a result of the major restructuring that local Government is undergoing through the Review of Public Administration, the four legacy Councils of Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle come together to form the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area in April 2015.

These four Councils have a history of working in partnership to identify common issues, to ensure that the public service they provide represents value for money and achieves maximum impact on the ground.

Existing Approaches

The detail of the services provided through the delivery of each of the four Community Support plans of the legacy Councils varied depending of the needs of each of the local communities but the core of the services remained the same throughout:

- ❖ Generalist voluntary advice services – i.e. welfare, benefits, housing advice etc.;
- ❖ Support for community centres/halls and facilities ;
- ❖ Promotion of volunteering;
- ❖ Youth citizenship initiatives;
- ❖ Capacity building/mentoring for community groups;
- ❖ Networking and training initiatives to promote community development training for community groups ;
- ❖ Supporting partnership working including collaborative working across the four merging Council areas;
- ❖ Networking opportunities to promote community development; and
- ❖ Recognition opportunities for the community & voluntary sector.

Whilst each of the four Councils currently had their own approach to measuring results or outcomes from each of their plans to support their local communities, a number of key achievements were identified as a direct result of Community Development activity across the four areas.

- ❖ Up to 1,000 groups across the area are making regular use of community facilities supported through each Council's Community Support Plan.

- ❖ Direct grant aid in excess of £250,000 has been distributed in the period 2013-14 across the areas in support of community development activity;
- ❖ 5,000 volunteers contributing over 75,000 hours of their time to the needs of their local communities;
- ❖ The four Councils helped to develop and have supported 43 different community festival events right across the area, ranging from local village community week events attracting up to 1,000 people to larger town based events led by local volunteers attracting up to 50,000 spectators and 1,500 participants. All of these activities levered in additional grant funds – in Coleraine and Moyle Councils together, this represented £235,600 in match funding against grants distributed in 2013-14.
- ❖ Each of the Councils provided for local Generalist Voluntary Advice provision with 35,945 individual advice enquiries met right across the new Council area in the period 2013-14 and with an estimated additional benefit uptake in excess of £1,000,000.
- ❖ Almost 300 community /voluntary groups benefitted from direct training initiatives originating in the Community Support Plans;
- ❖ Over 1,200 individuals participated in direct learning opportunities.

Looking Ahead

In 2013, the four Councils indicated their willingness to work together in a collaborative and integrated fashion and produced a Community Development Framework that identified common issues and needs, alongside a number of potential areas for greater collaboration. This report, which represents the second phase of that work, results in the production of an overarching Strategy for the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area and a detailed Action Plan for the new Council for the period 2015 – 2018.

The overall objectives of the commission were to:

- ❖ Produce a plan that would build on the achievements of legacy Council Community Support Plans but recognise and reflect that the new plan will have a substantially enhanced community development function, including tackling deprivation and developing more cohesive communities. This should be reflected in the action plan and grant aid policy produced as a result of this project;
- ❖ Build on the substantial direct consultation and engagement process undertaken in the first phase of the process to determine the needs and priorities of the area;
- ❖ Review grant aid policies of the four Councils with a specific focus on Community Development and Community Festivals, taking into account the priorities of both

the DSD and Causeway Coast and Glens Frameworks. This should result in proposals and recommendations for a new universal grant aid policy for the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council; and

- ❖ Consider options for management and/or delivery structures for effective community development practice in line with the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council requirements.

The work commenced in January 2014. Our approach to establish need was twofold:

1. A comprehensive desk research analysis was undertaken to establish the existing policy landscape and identify opportunities for collaborative working and gaps in existing provision.
2. A targeted, direct consultation and engagement process with community and voluntary representatives, private and public sector stakeholders, elected members and Council staff was undertaken across all four of the individual Council areas. This was designed to complement the extensive consultation undertaken throughout 2013 during the development of the Causeway Coast & Glens Community Support Framework stage of the project.

The consultation was designed to ensure that both the Strategy and the subsequent Action Plans were informed by as wide a range of voices as possible. The cooperation of those who took the time to contribute was greatly appreciated and their input proved to be invaluable when the new three year Strategic Community Action Plans were being developed.

In addition to the consultation, we considered the existing and emerging policy landscape at both a local and regional level, to help shape the final strategic Community Action Plans. It was imperative that both existing interventions and policy landscape (both local and regional) were considered together in order to give a full picture and enable the development of new relevant, innovative programmes.

In considering the social and economic profile of the new Council area, we were mindful that the demographic of the new Council has the potential to present challenges for both civic and wider society, as this will be their first experience living and working in a more challenging demographic Council model. It was therefore essential that the Community Development Action Plan is cognisant of this change.

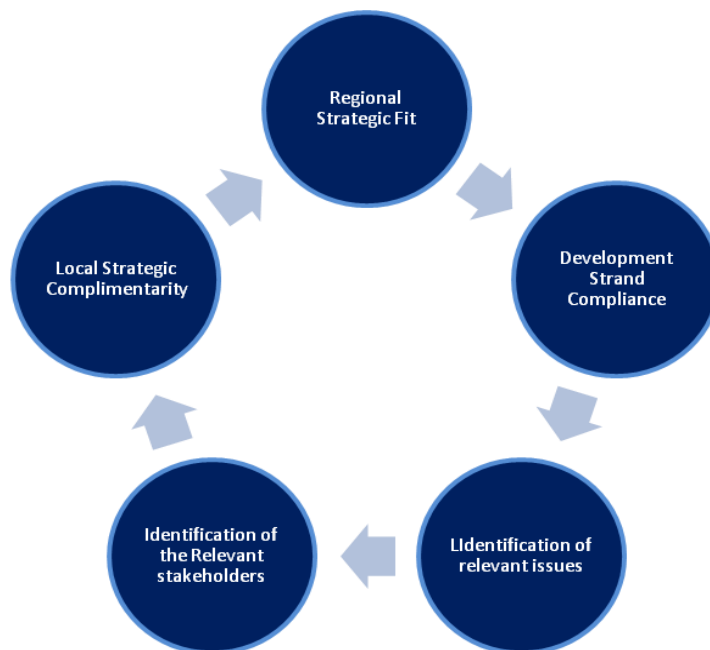
As part of the process we undertook a SWOT analysis in relation to Community Development in the new Council model and found that the strengths and opportunities of the Causeway

Coast and Glens in respect of Community Development appear to outnumber the weaknesses and threats identified, which is a positive outcome in respect of the potential impact of the new Strategy.

When developing the Strategic Action Plan, we developed a five step Strategic Framework to ensure only the actions which have the potential to achieve the most sustainable impact were progressed. The five steps of the Strategic Framework were:

- ❖ Fit with DSD Regeneration Framework;
- ❖ Addressing the issues identified in the Community Framework;
- ❖ Alignment with one of the four identified community development strands;
- ❖ Identification of relevant stakeholders; and
- ❖ Complementing and providing additionality to existing local strategies and programmes.

Strategic Framework Model



The Strategic Framework resulted in the development of four thematic strands of work which are scheduled to commence in April 2015. It is recommended that the strands would then continue through 2016 to 2018, building year on year the confidence, knowledge and skills of the participants to support maximum engagement in the development of Community Capacity in the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area. The four thematic strands developed to operationalise the strategy are detailed below.

Synopsis of Development Strands

Service	Strategic Priority	Programme	Programme Aims
Community Development	Increase Community Development Capacity	Building Core Capacity through a Small Grants Programme, Voluntary Advice Support, mentoring, training, networking and development support	Build the capacity of local communities to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and confidence to engage in collaborative, partnership working, including Community Planning
	Promoting Productive Engagement	Programme to develop and support capacity to ensure active constructive engagement by residents, council and C&V sector within the new Community Planning Framework.	Developing skills to ensure the planning and delivery of effective services across the Causeway Coast and Glens area
	Targeting Deprivation and Evidenced Need Through Partnership Working	Programme supporting c & V sector and service providers to engage with the relevant statutory agencies developing policy decisions which impact on the social, economic and physical regeneration of the area	Supporting partnership working to develop policy and practice, promoting social, economic and physical regeneration of the CC&G area.
	Supporting Communities To Achieve their Maximum Level of Sustainability	Programme Development for Council & Community Owned Community Facilities; Organisational Sustainability for Community Organisations;	Supporting the Sustainability of Community Infrastructure

Strand 1: Promotion of Core Community Capacity Building - This programme seeks to work with communities to build their core capacity to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and confidence to engage in collaborative partnership working, with particular reference to Community Planning. Strand one will be operationalised through the delivery of the following four actions:

Action 1: Volunteer Promotion;
Action 2: Advice Support;
Action 3: Capacity Development (generic); and
Action 4: Capacity Development (bespoke).

Strand 2: Promotion of Productive Engagement - This programme seeks to develop the skills of both Council staff and Community Organisations to develop a clear understanding of their interdependence in terms of the planning of effective service delivery, with particular reference to Community Planning. Strand two will be operationalised through the delivery of the following four actions:

- ❖ Action 5: Council Engagement;
- ❖ Action 6: Community Engagement;
- ❖ Action 7: Resident Engagement; and
- ❖ Action 8: Thematic Network Development.

Strand 3: Targeting of Deprivation and Evidenced Need through Partnership Working.

The end of the Neighbourhood Renewal programme as and when it occurs will present both an opportunity and challenge for the new Council area. This Strand of the strategy provides an opportunity to disseminate the best practice partnership model developed in the three existing Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships across the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

Community Planning will undoubtedly lead to the need for more inter-sectoral partnership working. The Council's unique role, at the heart of service delivery in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough area, will provide an opportunity to support community organisations and service providers to engage with the relevant statutory agencies to develop the policy decisions which impact on the social, economic and physical regeneration across the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough area. Strand three will be operationalised through the delivery of the following three actions:

- ❖ Action 9: Development of a Partnership Framework;
- ❖ Action 10: Area Partnerships; and
- ❖ Action 11: Community Chest.

Strand 4: Supporting Community Infrastructure to maximise Sustainability.

The changing policy landscape has provided opportunities, for those groups who wish to do so, to capitalise on their expertise and consider becoming delivery partners in meeting local needs, developing community assets and delivering local and central government aims. The council's responsibility in respect of this strand is twofold; firstly to provide developmental support to those groups who wish to avail of this new opportunity and secondly to support groups core costs to enable them to explore new mechanisms through which they can secure their future sustainability. Strand four will be operationalised through the delivery of the following four actions:

- ❖ Action 12: Programme Development for Council Owned Community Facilities;
- ❖ Action 13: Programme Development for Community Owned Multi-Use Facilities;
- ❖ Action 14: Organisational Sustainability for Community Organisations; and
- ❖ Action 15: Small Capital Works Grant.

The four strands each work with different constituent groups, using different methodologies to work on different needs, but with only one strategic aim; to develop the overall Community Capacity of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area. The result of the work will be:

- ❖ Increased partnership working in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council Borough area;
- ❖ Development of a more sustainable community sector in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area;
- ❖ Greater social cohesion in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council Borough area;
- ❖ Increased connectivity between neighbourhoods, towns and villages in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council Borough area;
- ❖ Early identification of local solutions for emerging needs in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council Borough area; and
- ❖ Increased community capacity in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council Borough area.

Conclusion in respect of the Community Development Objectives

Although each strand will have stand-alone community development outcomes, the real impact of the Strategy will be if the four strands are accepted as an interdependent solution to the development of community capacity in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

